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**Professor C Kameswara Rao**  
May 2002  
*http://www.medicinalplants-kr.org/THERAPEUTIC\_APPLICATIONS\_OF.HTM*

Saponins are naturally occurring chemical compounds, with the properties of soaps and detergents. They occur in different tissues of a large number of plant species including many common Indian food and medicinal plants. Although predominent in angiosperms, saponins also occur in some ferns (species of *Polypodium* and *Cyclamen*) and possibly algae. They even occur in some marine animals and snake venom as well.

**Michael W. Davidson** and **The Florida State University Research Foundation**  
1995-2010  
*http://microscopy.fsu.edu/phytochemicals/pages/saponin.html*  
  
Saponins are natural surfactants, or detergents, found in many plants, but they are most abundant in the desert plants Yucca and Quillaja. Extracts from these plants are commonly  used as foaming agents for beverages such as root beer. These biochemicals also have commercial applications such as ore separation in industrial and mining operations, and are useful in products such as photographic emulsions, cosmetics, and shampoos.  
  
  
**Peter R. Cheeke, Ph.D.** (Professor of Comparative Nutrition & OSU/LPI Affiliate Investigator)  
May, 1998  
*http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/sp-su98/saponins.html*  
  
Saponins are natural detergents found in many plants, especially certain desert plants. Saponins are also present in small amounts in some foods, such as soybeans and peas. The two major commercial sources of saponins are *Yucca schidigera*, which grows in the arid Mexican desert country of Baja California, and *Quillaja saponaria* (soapbark tree), found in arid areas of Chile. Saponins have detergent or surfactant properties because they contain both water-soluble and fat-soluble components. They consist of a fat-soluble nucleus, having either a steroid or triterpenoid structure, with one or more side chains of water-soluble carbohydrates (sugars).